

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 5, 25 and 26 are canceled, and claims 1, 24, 27, 28 and 41-43 are amended. Claims 3, 4, 14, 32, 33 and 38 were previously canceled. Claims 6, 7, 13, 34 and 37 were previously presented. Claims 2, 8-12, 15-23, 29-31, 35, 36, 39 and 40 remain as originally filed. As a result, claims 1, 2, 6-13, 15-24, 27-31, 34-37 and 39-43 are pending in the application. Independent claim 1 is amended to include the patentable limitations of allowable claim 5, and claim 5 is canceled. Independent claim 24 is amended to include the patentable limitations of allowable claim 26 and intervening claim 25, and claims 25 and 26 are canceled. Dependent claims 27 and 28 are amended to provide proper dependency. Allowed independent claim 41 is amended to remove unnecessary limitations. Claims 42 and 43 are amended to depend from allowed claim 41 and to correct an inadvertent typographical error.

Claim Objections

Pursuant to paragraph 4 of the above-referenced Office Action, claims 42 stands objected to because the limitation "a cover attached to the customer bridge an movable between an opened position and a closed position" contains a typographical error. Claim 42 is amended to delete "an." Claim 43 is likewise amended to delete "an" for the same reason.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Pursuant to paragraphs 5 and 6 of the Office Action, claims 42-43 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,802,170 (Smith et al.). The Examiner asserts that Smith et al. teaches a telephone network interface apparatus (i.e., a terminating device) 10 comprising each and every limitation of the rejected claims, as detailed on pages 3-4 of the Office Action.

Claims 42 and 43 have been amended to be dependent upon patentable claim 41, and thus, are likewise allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, without further traverse,

Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection to claim 42 and 43 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b).

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Pursuant to paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Office Action, claims 1, 2 and 6-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable (i.e., obvious) over Smith et al. in view of U.S. Patent 6,340,306 (Daoud). The Examiner asserts that Smith et al. discloses the invention as claimed except for a locking slide having a movable clasp. However, the Examiner further asserts that Daoud teaches a connector 10 having a top section 12 and a bottom section 14 wherein the top section has a clasp 15 which is movable between an engaged position and a disengaged position for engaging the top section to the bottom section. Therefore, the Examiner summarily concludes it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the movable clasp of Daoud with Smith et al. to establish an electrical and mechanical connection between the wires and the terminal strips.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to include the patentable limitations of allowable claim 5. Thus, claim 1 is patentable for at least this reason. Furthermore, Applicants point out that the claimed locking slide having a movable clasp does not “establish an electrical and mechanical connection between the wires and the terminal strips.” Instead, the claimed locking slide having a movable clasp provides a means for locking the movable cover on the customer bridge to prevent unauthorized access to the telephone jack provided (i.e., disposed) on the base. Thus, the combination proposed by the examiner does not produce the claimed invention, and as such, there would be no motivation to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the teachings of the references as suggested. Thus, claim 1 is patentable for at least these additional reasons. Claims 2 and 6-9 depend directly or indirectly from patentable base claim 1, and thus, are likewise allowable for at least the same reasons. Furthermore, Applicants point out that neither Smith et al. nor Daoud identically disclose or fairly suggest, alone or in combination, a *cover comprising a plug* that engages the jack disposed in the base, or mating resilient seals about the jack and the plug. Thus, claims 7-9 are patentable for at least these additional reasons.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claims 1, 2 and 6-9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Pursuant to paragraph 9 of the Office Action, claims 10-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable (i.e., obvious) over Smith et al. and Daoud as applied to claim 1, and further in view of U.S. Patent 4,793,822 (Cozzens et al.). The Examiner asserts that the combination of Smith et al. and Daoud discloses the invention as claimed except for "an internally threaded post and an externally threaded screw for the insulation displacement contact of the [stuffer] assembly." However, the Examiner further asserts that Cozzens et al. teaches "an electrical connector for terminating conductive wires through the cooperation of a threaded screw element and a threaded and slotted terminal insulation displacement connector (IDC)." Therefore, the Examiner summarily concludes it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the threaded IDC of Cozzens et al. to the combination of Smith et al. and Daoud so as to accommodate a range of conductor wires.

Independent claim 1 is patentable for at least the reasons discussed above. Claims 10-12 depend directly or indirectly from patentable base claim 1, and thus, are likewise allowable for at least the same reasons. Furthermore, Applicants point out that neither Smith et al., Daoud nor Cozzens et al. identically disclose or fairly suggest, alone or in combination, an IDC of a stuffer assembly positioned on the base at an angle relative to the wire insertion passage. Thus, claim 11 is patentable for at least this additional reason. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claims 10-12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Pursuant to paragraph 10 of the Office Action, claims 24, 28-31, and 34-36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable (i.e., obvious) over Smith et al. in view of U.S. Patent 5,844,021 (Koblitz et al.). The Examiner asserts that Smith et al. discloses the invention as claimed except for "an insulation displacement contact at an angle relative to the wire insertion passage." However, the Examiner further asserts that Koblitz et al. teach "sealed electrical connectors where the insulation displacement contact of the assembly (i.e., terminal) is

positioned on the base at an angle relative to the wire insertion passage.” Therefore, the Examiner summarily concludes it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made “to apply the technique of positioning an insulation displacement contact at an angle relative to the wire insertion passage ... and provide the alignment to the wire opening holes.”

Independent claim 24 has been amended to include the patentable limitations of allowable claim 26 and intervening claim 25. Thus, claim 24 is patentable for at least this reason. Claims 28-31 and 34-36 depend directly or indirectly from patentable base claim 24, and thus, are likewise allowable for at least the same reasons. Furthermore, Applicants point out that neither Smith et al. nor Koblitz et al. identically disclose or fairly suggest, alone or in combination, a *cover comprising a plug* that engages the jack disposed in the base, or mating resilient seals about the jack and the plug. Thus, claims 28-30 are patentable for at least these additional reasons. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claims 24, 28-31 and 34-36 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Pursuant to paragraph 11 of the Office Action, claims 25 and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable (i.e., obvious) over Smith et al. and Koblitz et al. as applied to claim 24, and further in view of Daoud. The Examiner asserts that the combination of Smith et al. and Koblitz et al. discloses the invention as claimed except for “a locking slide having a movable clasp.”

Claim 25 has been canceled. Claim 27 depends directly from patentable base claim 24, and thus, is likewise allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claims 25 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Allowable Subject Matter

Pursuant to paragraphs 12 and 13 of the Office Action, claims 13, 15-23, 37 and 39-41 stand allowed. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter and statement of reasons for allowance.

Pursuant to paragraph 14 of the Office Action, claims 5 and 26 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter and statement of reasons for indication of allowable subject matter. Claim 5 is canceled and claim 1 is amended to include the patentable limitations of allowable claim 5. Claim 26 (and intervening claim 25) is canceled and claim 24 is amended to include the patentable limitations of allowable claim 26.

For at least the reasons stated hereinabove, Applicants submit that the pending claims 1, 2, 6-13, 15-24, 27-31, 34-37 and 39-43 are patentable. Applicants have reviewed the cited references and submit that none discloses or fairly suggests the claimed terminating device or network interface device comprising the combination of features recited in the pending claims. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to issue a Notice of Allowability for the pending claims 1, 2, 6-13, 15-24, 27-31, 34-37 and 39-43.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and these remarks, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the objections and rejections to the claims. This Amendment AFTER FINAL is being timely filed and is fully responsive to the Office Action. Furthermore, this Amendment AFTER FINAL does not introduce new claims or issues that would require further search or consideration. Thus, the application is in condition for immediate allowance and Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to issue a Notice of Allowability for the pending claims. Applicants encourage the Examiner to contact the undersigned directly to further the prosecution of any remaining issues, and thereby expedite allowance of the application.

This Amendment does not result in more independent or total claims than paid for previously. Accordingly, **no fee for excess independent or total claims is believed to be due.** The Examiner is hereby authorized to charge any fee due in connection with the filing of this response, including any excess claims fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-2167. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 not already accounted for, such an extension is requested and the fee should likewise be charged to Deposit Account No. 19-2167. Any overpayment should be credited to Deposit Account No. 19-2167.

Respectfully submitted,



Christopher C. Dremann (36,504)
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 36,504
P. O. Box 489
Hickory, N. C. 28603
Telephone: 828/901-5904
Facsimile: 828/901-5206

Dated: July 13, 2004